Tri-State
Autism Spectrum Disorder
Webinar Series

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NEBRASKA
**autism spectrum disorders**
NETWORK

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Assessing the
Communication/Literacy Needs of
Students with ASD

Pamela Williamson, Ph.D. and Christi Carnahan, Ed.D.

Kaderavek & Rabidoux
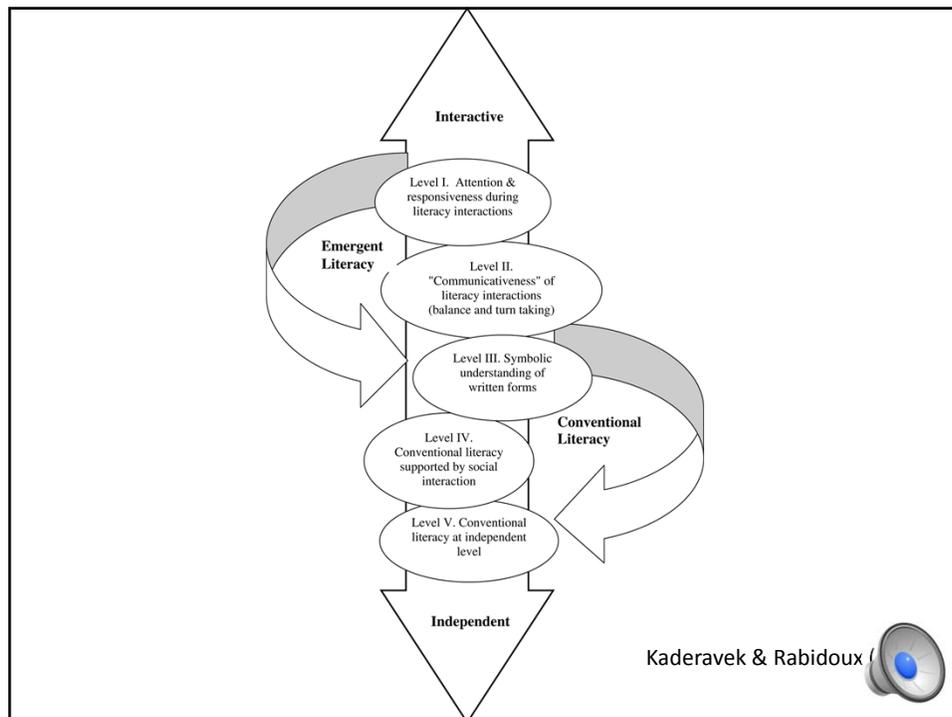
Assessment Process

- Establish structure compatible with student needs
  – Visual schedule
  – Reinforcement
  – Task difficulty
- Hypothesize the student's interactive/independent literacy level
- Select literacy assessments compatible with the student's emergent/conventional literacy level
- Assess and reflect

Global Assessment: Interactive to Independent Literacy
(Kaderavek & Rabidoux, 2004)

1	Focus on joint attention and response/engagement in literacy activities with a partner. Onus for building engagement is on the partner. Begin with individual's interests.
2	Focus on mutual interactions and turn taking between the emergent learner and the literacy partner; high levels of reinforcement while participating in a variety of literacy interactions. The partner builds on the individual's gestures, vocalizations, words, etc.. If the teacher asks the child to engage in skills "beyond the child's interest or ability, then the balance and the dynamic social support of the interaction may be lost" (p. 246).
3	The individual begins to understand the "symbolic relationship of written language forms" (p. 246). For example, they begin to that the printed text corresponds with the words the partner reads.
4	The learner begins to use conventional literacy skills with support.
5	The learner independently uses conventional literacy.

Level 1: Guiding Questions

- Does the child respond to and initiate bids for joint attention?
- If the child does not engage in joint attention, consider the following:
  - Does the learner respond to social bids from others? (i.e., I do, you do)
  - Does the learner initiate back and forth (social bids) interactions?
  - Will the learner maintain an initiation started by a partner?
  - How many exchanges does the child engage in?
  - Does the leaner demonstrate joint attention motivating items (e.g., objects and pictures)?
  - Once engaged, how long does the child maintain attention?

Skill Area	+/- /NO	Evidence
Responds to Interactions		
Initiates Interactions		
Demonstrates Joint Attention		
Describe the following:		
With whom (communication partner) was the child observed communicating		
For what purposes (function) was the child observed communicating?		
How (form) did the child communicate?		

	Interval	Setting	Communication Partner(s)	Initiations	Responses	Form(s)	Function(s)	Materials Used	Demonstrated Joint Attention? (consider duration)
Not all columns are necessary; edit based on target skills/student needs									
	1								
	2								
	3								
	4								
	5								

Level 1 Summary

- Assessment goal: Collect data to guide engagement sessions

- Goal at the end of level 1: Joint attention

- Instructional objectives might include:
  - Increasing the number of exchanges
  - Increasing the duration of exchanges
  - Increasing exchanges in particular settings, or with particular partners
  - Increase exchanges that include objects
  - Increase the duration of exchanges that include objects

Level 2: Guiding Questions

- Does the learner initiate as part of a literacy event?
- Does the learner maintain a topic during interactions around literacy events?
- Does the learner browse books?
  - Point to front and back cover?
  - Turn pages?
  - Understand function of words (i.e., differentiate between pictures and words)?
  - Know where to begin reading?
    - Right to left progression
    - Top to bottom

Informal Assessments

- Concept of Book
  - Attitude Towards Books
- Concept of Print
- Language Assessment
  - Word level
  - Concept level
  - Sentence level

Concept of Book

Concepts about Books		
	Yes/No	Comments
look at the picture of an object in a book and realize it is a symbol for the real object		
handle a book without attempting to eat or chew it		
identify the front, back, top, or bottom of a book		
turn the pages of a book correctly		
point to the print when asked "what do people look at when they read?"		
show how picture and print connect		
point to where a reader begins reading		
point to a book's title		
point to a book's author		

Note. Adapted from (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 2007).

Attitude Toward Books

	Yes/No	Comments
Participate in book-sharing routine		
Listen to story		
Voluntarily look at books		
Show excitement about books and reading		
Ask adults to read to him/her		
Use books as a resource for answers to questions		
Preference for book format (e.g., PP book, iPad, book)		

Note. Adapted from (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 2007).

Concept of Print

Concepts of Print		
	Yes/No	Comments
understands word boundaries (i.e., one-to-one correspondence with words) *Note:* this can be assessed with a printed copy of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.* Model pointing to each word for the student while reading the poem aloud. Ask the student to do the same.		
show that a reader reads left to right with return sweeps		
find a requested letter		
provide a given letter's name		
ask questions or make comments about letters		
ask questions or make comments about words		
read words or phrases		
read sentences		
read along while adult reads familiar stories		

Note. Adapted from (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 2007).

Language Assessment: Word Level

Receptive/Expressive Words	
Categories of words (e.g., animals, foods) including the category label as well as individual items within a category (e.g., animals: horse, dog, cat)	
Modifiers (e.g., adjective, adverbs)	
Mental state words (e.g., love, angry, afraid)	
Morphological endings (e.g., "-s" for plural, "-ed" for past tense; "'s" for possessive)	

Note. (Pierce, Summer, & O'DeKirk, 2005).

Language Assessment: Sentence Level

Phrase/Sentence (i.e., utterance, sign, device)

_____MLU (mean length of utterance) – based on dictation during literacy-related activities

and/or

_____Average number of signs/symbols spontaneously used during literacy-related activities

Note. Adapted from (Pierce, Summer, & O'DeKirk, 2005).

Summary for Level 2

- Assessment goal: Collect data related to emergent reading skills and language

- Instructional goal: Moving toward more conventional literacy instruction

- Instructional objectives:
  - Increase students' knowledge about concepts of book and print
  - Continue to encourage positive attitudes towards books and reading
  - Increase students' knowledge of print concepts
  - Increase conceptual and vocabulary knowledge
  - Increase the length of responses during literacy events

Level 3: Guiding Questions

- Does the child recite a story from memory while attending to words?
- What is the child's level of abstraction in representing concepts to words (objects, miniature objects, photographs, colored line drawings, black and white line drawings, printed words)?
  - Does the child engage in meaningful exchanges using symbolic representation?
- Does the child recognize some printed words including name and other meaningful words?
- Phonological/phonemic awareness knowledge?

Assessments for Level 3

- Book Reading Assessment
- Word Level of Abstraction Assessment
- Lists of known important words
- Emergent Writing Assessment
- Phonological assessment tasks

Book Reading Assessment

- Select the student's favorite book, and ask them to "read it to you."

- Note their behaviors.

Word Level Abstraction Assessment

- Assess the student's receptive understanding of words
  - Object
  - Miniature object
  - Color picture
  - Color line drawing
  - Black line drawing
  - Word with picture
- Considerations: Attention, placement of materials, interest, understanding the task, response system
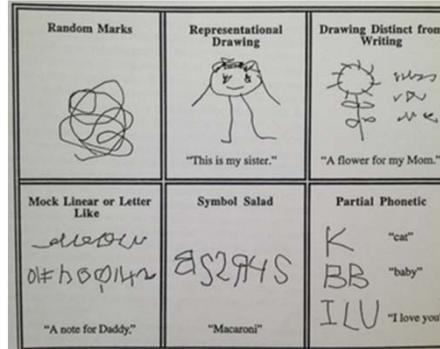
Identification of Important Words

- Flash important printed words

- Ask students to write down all the words they know

Writing Assessment

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, and Phonics Checklist

Skills	Sample Performance Tasks	Comments
Rhyming words: recognition	Ask: "Do these two words rhyme?" (house, mouse; cat, tree)	
Rhyming words: production	Select a song or poem with rhyming words. Teacher says the words, pausing before the rhyme. The child fills in the missing rhyming word. Ask: "What rhymes with boat? See? Fish?" **Note:** Nonsense words count as correct	
Sentence segmenting	Say: "Clap the number of words you hear in this sentence." (I like dogs) Note: Only use on-syllable words in the sentences	
Syllable segmenting	Say: "Clap the number of syllables you hear in bat, wagon, elephant, hippopotamus."	
Syllable blending	Say: "I'll say a word slowly, then you tell me what word I said." (teacher: rain-bow; child: rainbow; teacher: ab-so-lute-ly; child: absolutely)	
Beginning sound: recognition	Collect pictures of things or objects that begin with the same sound. Review names of objects with the child. Say: "Put all of the pictures (or objects) that begin like (sample object) in this pile."	
Beginning sound: production	Say: "What words can you say that begin like b-aby? c-at?"	
Onset rime (sometimes known as word families)	Ask: "What words can you make that end in –at? I'll start: f-at"	
Phoneme isolation	Ask: "What sounds do you hear at the beginning of foot, hop, run, yes?"	
Phoneme blending	Ask: "What word am I saying, b-a-t?" Child: "Bat." "What word am I saying, f-ee-t." Child: "feet"	
Phoneme segmenting	Ask: "Say each word slowly so that you can hear all of th sounds. What sounds do you hear in bat?" Child: "b-a-t" "What sounds do you hear in love?" Child" "l-o-v-e"	
Phoneme substitution	Ask: "If we take the/k/ off of cat and put on a /h/ sound, what new word have I made?	
Connects beginning sounds with letter (phonics)	Say: "Help me write the word daddy." Record as the child says the letter names.	

Note. Adapted from (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 2001).

Summary of Level 3

- Assessment goal: Develop an understand of students emergent literacy skills

- Instructional goals: Continue moving toward conventional literacy targets

- Instructional objectives:
  - Develop more sophisticated understandings about the function of printed words and reading
  - Develop knowledge of the relationship between sounds and letters
  - Develop appreciation of book reading
  - Develop writing skills

Level 4: Guiding Questions

- Guiding Questions
  - What is the student's knowledge of the alphabet?
  - What sight words does the student recognize?
  - To what extent can the student tell and retell familiar stories?
  - What is the student's listening comprehension level? Do I need to assess their reading comprehension level?

Knowledge of the Alphabetic Principal and Sound/Symbol Correspondences

	A	S	Word	I.R.		A	S	Word	I.R.
A					a				
F					f				
K					k				
P					p				
W					w				
Z					z				
B					b				
H					h				
O					o				
J					j				
U					u				
					a				
C					c				
Y					y				
L					l				
Q					q				
M					m				
D					d				
N					n				
S					s				
X					x				
I					i				
E					e				
G					g				
R					r				
V					v				
T					t				
					g				
			Total Each Column						

Confusions:

Letters Sounds Unknown:

Comments:

Other Word Reading Skills

- Sight words

- High frequency words

- Blending and decoding phonics assessments

- Spelling inventories

Listening and Reading Comprehension

- Informal reading inventory
  - Narrative
  - Expository

- Assess by reading aloud informal reading passages and questions
  - Narrative
  - Expository

K-2 ILLUSTRATED BEGINNING WRITER'S RUBRIC

	IDEAS	
EXCEPTIONAL 6	• The Big idea is clear and original; the topic is narrowed • Supporting details are relevant, accurate and specific • Pictures, graphs, charts (if present) enhance the text • Focus: The writing stays on topic • Development is generous and complete	
EXPERIENCED 5	• The Big idea is clear; the topic is narrowed • Supporting details are relevant, logical and mostly accurate • Pictures, graphs, charts (if present) clarify the text • Focus: Usually stays on topic • Development is complete	
CAPABLE 4	• The Big idea is clear, but general—a simple story or explanation • Support is present in the text • Pictures (if present) support the text • Focus: Generally on topic, with a few missteps • Development is adequate	
DEVELOPING 3	• The Big idea is stated in text • Support is minimal • Pictures (if present) offer supporting details • Focus: Limited to one sentence (or repeats the same idea) • Development is simplistic	
EMERGING 2	• Idea(s) are conveyed in a general way through text, labels, symbols • Support: Not present in the text • Pictures: Connect with a word, label, symbol • Focus: Unclear or extremely limited • Development: Not present	
BEGINNING 1	• Ideas are unclear; print sense is just beginning • Support: Not present • Pictures: Not clear • Focus: Not present • Development: Not present	

Level 4 Summary

- Assess word reading skills
  - Alphabetic principles
  - Word reading

- Comprehension
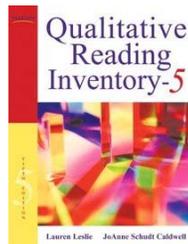 - Listening
  - Reading

- Writing

Level 5: Guiding Questions

- What are the student's independent and instructional reading levels?
- In what areas are the student's opportunities for becoming a stronger reader (e.g., genre, skills, question answering, word recognition, fluency)?

Qualitative Reading Inventory-5

Writing Assessments

- Planning

- Writing stories

- Writing exposition

Summarizing Level 5

- Less adult support is needed

- Assessment data is needed in the areas of word reading, reading comprehension, and writing

- Instructional goals are aimed at extending the development of literacy skills